

## **REMARKS**

Entry of the foregoing amendments is respectfully requested.

### **Summary of Amendments**

Upon entry of the foregoing amendments claims 161 and 188 are cancelled and claims 152, 171, 183 and 188 are amended, whereby claims 152-160, 162-187 and 189-213 will be pending, with claims 152, 183 and 208 being independent claims.

Support for the new claims can be found throughout the present specification and in the cancelled claims.

Applicants point out that the amendments to claims 152 and 183 are without prejudice or disclaimer, and Applicants expressly reserve the right to prosecute these claims in their original, unamended form in one or more continuation and/or divisional applications.

Applicants further note that entry of the claims submitted herewith is proper because these claims do not raise any new issues and do not require a further search.

### **Summary of Office Action**

As an initial matter, Applicants note with appreciation that the claims 208-213 are allowed.

Applicants further note with appreciation that the Office Action appears to indicate that claims 161 and 188 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claims 152 and 183 are again rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Vermeer, U.S. Patent No. 5,880,076 (hereafter "VERMEER"). Applicants note

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that dependent claims 153-182 and 184-207 are indicated in the Office Action Summary as being merely objected to, but it is not clear if any of these claims would also be allowable (in addition to claims 161 and 188) if rewritten in independent form. Clarification in this regard is respectfully requested.

### **Response to Office Action**

Without agreeing to the allegations set forth in the instant Office Action and merely in order to advance prosecution of the present application to allowance, Applicants are submitting herewith claims which either have already been allowed or appear to be allowable. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of record is respectfully requested.

### **CONCLUSION**

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that all claims in the present application are in condition for allowance, wherefore an early issuance of the Notices of Allowance and Allowability are respectfully solicited. If any issues yet remain which can be resolved by a telephone conference, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,  
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/Heribert F. Muensterer/  
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